
CONTENTS

MAY, 1926

EPITHALAMIUM IN THE MODERN MANNER	<i>Amy Lowell</i>	322
A SUMMER MEMORY (Translated from the Norwegian by Rudolph H. Gjelsness)	<i>Johan Falberget</i>	323
DEFINITIONS: AGE	<i>Henri Faust</i>	328
THE BORGIIAS WALK IN THE VATICAN GARDEN	<i>Tench Tilghman</i>	329
SONNET OF THE FRAIL FALLACIES	<i>Royall Snow</i>	331
WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD	<i>Howard Mumford Jones</i>	332
HE VISITS AN OCULIST	<i>James Feibleman</i>	338
HAVANA SONNET	<i>Gustav Davidson</i>	339
QUESTIONING.....	<i>J. Hamilton Basso</i>	339
BLOATED CRACKER	<i>Allen Walker Reed</i>	340
VISION	<i>E. D. Todd</i>	340
THE FUNCTION OF LITERARY CRITICISM.....	<i>Raymond F. Howes</i>	341
TROPICAL FRAGMENT	<i>Joseph Hilton Smyth</i>	344
THE PASSING OF METHUSALEH	<i>Herbert Drennon</i>	344
WITCHES' DANCE	<i>F. Merle Constiner</i>	345
NIGHT	<i>Royall Snow</i>	345
WALT WHITMAN IN NEW ORLEANS	<i>John S. Kendall</i>	346
BECAUSE OF BEAUTY	<i>Maud Uschold</i>	354
REVIEWS:		
SALUT MANHATTAN.....		
.....	<i>Cuthbert Wright</i>	355
THE WEARY BLUES		
.....	<i>Joseph Hilton Smyth</i>	358
THE SONG OF THE INDIAN WARS		
.....	<i>John McClure</i>	359
POEMS FROM THE WORKS OF CHARLES COTTON.....		
.....	<i>Adaline Katz</i>	360
ANOTHER DEMOSTHENES	<i>Richard Kirk</i>	360

Epithalamium in the Modern Manner

By AMY LOWELL

The round, red moon ran a level eye along the hayfield,
Appraising conditions with a view to possibilities.
It was the moon's business to see that the shadows of the cocks
were of sufficient size,
As a preliminary to the seasonable arrival of the next generation.

“To one enamoured of dragonflies,
What is a chip hat with a ribbon around it?
To one engrossed in a game of cribbage,
What is the importance of the treaty of Ghent?”
Which shows that Archibald was in a naughty humour,
And Johanna more than usually occupied with the counting of
grass-blades.

The moon caught them in her long orange arms
And jostled them together with so thorough a completeness
That they fell, giggling, into a haycock shadow,
As perfect a pair of young animals as need be
For the maintenance of the species man on an ant-corroded planet.

A Summer Memory

By JOHN FALBERGET

(Translated from The Norwegian by Rudolph H. Gjelsness)

ON a bright July night, Johannes Trøen, a mountain peasant, came driving up the Gaul valley with a cart load of merchandise from Trondhjem. His horse was old and saddle-backed and labored painfully at every turn in the road, while his smooth-shod feet kept slipping back in the loose gravel and on the bald-faced rocks. Where the grade was steepest, Johannes had to lend a hand to lighten the load. Once reaching the top of an incline, both horse and driver would stop, out of breath and perspiring, and take a long rest. Johannes Troen was an old man now: 83 last spring. Not that he had lost much of the strength and vigor of his youth as yet—but anyhow it began to tell on one to have to share the horse's burden on so long a journey. He was annoyed that Gray should fail so sadly, for Gray was no more than 20 and so was indeed hardly past the first flush of youth.

Johannes took the pipe out of his mouth, looked down at the road and laughed whimsically. For every bend that he and Gray succeeded in working up to, he rewarded himself with a smoke. A great smoker he was. This did not mean that he filled his pipe with fresh tobacco every time—such extravagance was not for such as he. No, but he would remove the pipe thoughtfully from his vest pocket, tap down the ashes in the bowl with his little finger, apply the match and take a few long puffs, immediately exhaling the

smoke again. It was the smoke circling thin and blue into the warm summer air that was the grandest sight of all. Flowers of memory would blossom out of the smoke and throw their enchanting perfume around this old weather-beaten peasant from the Røros mountains.

Every summer for more than sixty years, he had driven his cart load of dried fish, flour and grits, up the Gaul valley. He had known many and exciting adventures on these trips and during his brief stays in the city of Trondhjem.

Of all of them, there was one that came to mind oftener than the others—the memory of a wonderful summer and Eda. This memory was now well-nigh a half-century old, but to him it returned each year, equally young and fresh and beautiful, and so it would be throughout his life, yes, verily until the day he would be dreaming under the sod in the little mountain churchyard.

Johannes Troen had just helped Gray up a steep ridge, from the top of which he could glimpse the blue hills of his home district. It was midnight and the weather was clear and mild. He guided the horse to the side of the road, unhitched the wagon and took off the harness. Gray went his way, eating leisurely among the bushes. The brass bell he carried tinkled as he moved.

Johannes wandered out over the ridges, gathering dry twigs and juniper to build a fire beside the rocks that had served this purpose so long. Many a

summer night he had rested here beside the burning twigs—more than fifty times he had warmed himself by such a camp-fire and dreamed: Eda sat here once too, beside him, while on the other side sat Lars the tinker.

Johannes loosened the rope which confined the load to the wagon, and extracted his lunch pail. He opened the lid for a glance at the contents, and then wandered down to a brook to fill the coffee kettle with water. Returning, he absent-mindedly adjusted the kettle over the fire. He was thinking—about Eda—and Lars the tinker, and when he was only thirty.

While the sizzling of the boiling water and the tinkling of the bell on old Gray's neck broke the stillness of the summer night, he sat down and began to cut thin slices from a piece of ham. The memory of Eda and Lars passed through his consciousness; he saw them both before him as vividly as when he had known them: Eda, dark, sun-burned, twenty; Lars the tinker, about his own age, thin-faced, black-eyed;—both with gold rings in their ears.

Eda and Lars-tinker were married, in tramp fashion. He had met them in Trondhjem and the three had joined company up the Gaul valley. The pair were intending to go into the mountains and then south to East Dale. Lars would earn his way by mending pots and kettles, bartering clocks and fishing.

The entire way up the valley, Eda had kept close to Johannes. She was wanton and passionate. And strangely beautiful too. At first he fought shy of her: a tramp is a tramp! But Eda was hard to resist. She was like a live coal,

firing his blood and arousing his passion. As they proceeded, Lars-tinker had become more and more forbidding in mien, his eyes flashing with anger. But that did not worry Johannes; it was many years since he had met the man who could down him in a battle of fists, and he feared no man in the mountains—anywhere. No, Lars-tinker could not frighten him away from Eda.

That time too, they had stopped here to rest. They were sitting at the fire, sharing the lunch, when suddenly a knife-blade flashed in the fist of Lars-tinker, and the blood spouted from a wound in Johannes' left shoulder. He was up in a flash, seized Lars by the neck and back, raised him up in the air above his head, arms outstretched, and then dashed him heavily down to the hard ground. Lars-tinker lay there unable to move a limb. "Off with your coat," Eda screamed. She applied warm ashes to the wound and stopped the flow of blood. Then she helped him put the horse in the shafts and they drove on—Eda and he. They gave no heed to Lars-tinker, but let him lie where he had fallen. Since that day they had neither seen nor heard more of him. It was reasonable to suppose he was dead long since for tramps seldom lived to old age.

That fall, Johannes and Eda were married. The neighbors in the valley sneered and scoffed at the match, but Johannes was not disturbed. Of all the women in the community, none was more beautiful than Eda, moreover none could vie with her in house-wifely arts: Johannes loved her and would not have exchanged her for a princess of royal blood. About their humble home, all

was peace and sunshine. The floor was scrubbed white and strewn with juniper every day—there was a sound of joyful singing mingled with the toil, for Eda could transform the dullest work-day.

But the following year, Eda died. Their baby died too. It was as if everything at the Troen place died with them on that day, leaving Johannes in the chill of an unrelenting winter. Sunshine fled, and a damp atmosphere lay over all; the house seemed so big and empty without her; the yard and stables were desolate. Relatives said he should marry again, for there was many a comely mountain lass who looked covetously at Johannes Troen, but he would hear none of that.

Johannes would not marry again. It hurt him to think that someone might take from him his cherished memories of Eda—perhaps to give him nothing in return. Not for all the wealth in the world, not for anyone, would he sacrifice his memories. Eda was the only one he had ever loved. She was the sunbeam that had penetrated into the dark of his toilsome life and shone so bright and warm for one brief day.

Eda seemed to come back to him on these summer trips to Trondhjem. She walked beside the cart, talking and laughing, and crept so close to him. He could feel again her warm breath against his face—or could this be only the wind? He was young again, only thirty, and she was even more beautiful than he had known her. He heard her laughter in the woods. It warmed him—it gladdened his spirit—it made him wild and giddy. He would trudge for hours at a time and fancy that Eda

in flesh and blood was walking with him and whispering in his ear.

This journey to the city was the big event of the year for Johannes Troen. It was a happy day when he could put the horse before the two-wheeled cart and take his place upon the sacks of hay. Always, he was decked out in new dark homespun, with frills that were startlingly white and freshly-ironed. The Lord was merciful and kind to grant him this joy year after year. For that he would never quite be able to express his gratitude.

The city journey had this year been highly successful: there had been fine summer weather with sun and south wind by day, and the nights had been warm and light. Eda had been with him the entire way. She seemed to meet him as it were, and join with him. She tripped gaily along, pointing at trees and rocks, asking if he remembered this and that.

If he remembered? All! He had to laugh with her. . . . He laughed so the tears came to his eyes and rolled down his sunburned cheeks. What a fool he was. . . . once and again he had to dry his eyes on his coat sleeves.

There was an angry sizzling which diverted his attention from his reverie to the boiling coffee. He leaned over and pulled the kettle to him. It was hot and burned his finger. Devilish hot! He shook the injured member and blew on it.

Johannes sat inhaling his coffee from the saucer, blowing at it at intervals and biting off bits of brown sugar as he drank. There came the sharp report of a rifleshot and a bullet struck into the fire, scattering ashes and coals

in all directions. Johannes jumped to his feet.

At a spot beyond a ridge, he saw a cloud of rifle smoke floating in the wind. He had caught sight of a swarthy face, too, under a large hat just above a hillock.

Angry and excited, he seized the axe from the cart and set off in the direction of the face. Johannes was not a timid soul, and wanted to get at the fellow before he had time to re-load.

"Come out of that!" he shouted, running with the axe ready to strike.

"Will you come out of that?" He was aroused now. In his youth he had been a champion fighter, and the old blood was quickening after many years of rest.

A small, crooked tramp, with a muzzle-loader in his hand started up from his hiding place and hurried along the ridge with Johannes in close pursuit. He judged it best to teach the rascal a lesson at once, or he might steal up on him later and shoot again. The tramp tripped up and fell, got up, but tripped again. Johannes caught up with him. Aroused now to a high pitch of anger, he siezed the gun from the fleeing one and struck him a heavy blow on the neck. The tramp sank down, muttering an oath. He fell with his face to the ground and lay still. Johannes stared at him. Curiously familiar this figure was, but where had he seen it before? He turned the man over. "Tinker-Lars!" Could he believe his eyes? "Tinker-Lars!", he said again. "And you are still alive." He became thoughtful.

Lars-tinker only grunted. The blood was rushing from nose and ears.

Then all the anger seemed suddenly

to leave Johannes, and he felt strangely mild and kind at heart. For Eda was with him again, so sort of proud of him for his strength and fearlessness.

"Did I hit too hard this time too, Lars?", he asked, bending down over the tramp.

"No, this time you didn't hit hard enough, Johannes Troen," Lars-tinker had difficulty with the words. There was the hoarseness peculiar to the tramp in his voice. "Had you hit a little harder it might have put an end to this useless life."

"Don't say that, Lars!", said Johannes. "Try to get up and I'll get you a drop of coffee." He took Lars by the shoulders and with some difficulty raised him to his feet. The two staggered along toward the fire, but Johannes had to support him the entire way; he could not stand alone.

Back at the fire, Johannes poured out a cup of coffee and cut off a few slices of ham. The sick one came to a little at first, but soon after lay there in a sort of coma.

Johannes hitched the horse to the cart again. On top of the flour sacks and bundles of dried fish, he prepared a bed and laid Lars-tinker there. This time, he was not to be left behind. Johannes had come to a decision too that if Lars recovered and was willing, he should come to Troen and spend the rest of his days there.

Now the load was still heavier for Gray, so Johannes had to help even at the smallest inclines. He stopped occasionally and sought out a brook or mountain pool, bringing back a cup of fresh cool water to pour between the sick one's lips. But Lars showed no improvement.

Toward morning, he put a question to Johannes. Was Eda still living? "No, she is dead," Johannes replied unsteadily.

Lars was silent after that, laid his head back and closed his eyes.

The horse labored along with the heavy load. The sun appeared over the hills and birds awoke and sang. Johannes walked thoughtfully beside the cart, setting his stick firmly down in the loose gravel. He was thinking of the last time he had an encounter with Lars, when he had raised him above his head and dashed him into the ground. That was fifty years ago. He was thinking too, how long it took to finish anything in this world. Everything seemed to revolve in a circle; Lars and he had walked the circle, finally meeting at the other side after fifty years.

The sun beat down on them. Gray pulled on, Johannes helping at the inclines, and over the level spots ruminating on the riddle of life. "Funny old world," he mumbled. "If one could only understand it all." Never in all his life had he been given so much to reflect upon.

Late the following evening, Johannes Troen stopped outside the parsonage in Holt dale. He opened the gate noiselessly and made his way up to the main building. He came out again a little later, followed by the minister.

"Is he so ill?" asked the pastor, looking at Lars-tinker lying on top of the load.

"Yes, he is very low," answered Johannes. Then he put an arm under Lars and began to lift him from the cart.

"Wait there, let me help you!" said the minister.

"Oh no, I can manage alone," insisted

Johannes. He carried Lars in his arms up toward the parsonage.

The minister followed, gravely shaking his head. There were strong men in the mountains still.

"How old are you, Johannes?" he asked.

"Eighty-three, last spring."

He put Lars gently down on a bed in the servants' room.

Shortly before midnight, the minister began to prepare Lars for communion. His questions, however, brought only incoherent answers. Afterwards, in full regalia, the minister stood beside Johannes and sang a hymn—both holding the book:

"Awaken, in the east a dawn!

Awaken, lo, God's holy state.

Away will midnight's darkness creep;

When strikes the hour of God—who sleeps?"

It was just at sunset—that long sunset of the northern summer. The last rays shone in through the small window panes; they fell over the hymn book and the hands of the two men holding it. Perfume from the garden, of rowan and cherry, was wafted in through the open window, which played back and forth on its fastenings and blinked in the breezes.

A few hours later, Lars-tinker died. Johannes considered for a moment whether he ought to confess to the minister how matters had stood between himself and Lars, but on sober reflection, he concluded to let the matter rest.

"It is better I take that matter up with the Lord, myself," he said. He took ten dalers in silver out of a brass-clasped pocket-book, and handed it to

the minister. It was to go toward a decent burial, and a large tarred cross over Lars-tinker.

Then Johannes Troen continued his journey to the mountains. But the minister, who followed him to the gate to say farewell, murmured again as his eyes followed the horse and driver disappearing around a bend in the road.

"Eighty-three! I must say there still are strong men in the mountains."

Johannes walked straight and sturdy beside his load. On his face there was an expression of satisfaction and joy. Eda seemed to be walking beside him again, and closer than ever before. She

whispered, laughed, and was so proud and happy. "Oh, you Johannes," he thought he heard her say. "Now you were really wonderful. There is no one like you. No one in the whole world."

Again he saw the blue of his home mountains. From their snowy summits there came down to him a steady cooling breeze. Not since Eda died could Johannes remember being so supremely happy. He felt younger and stronger than ever. "Get up! old plug!" He put both hands to the cart and pushed so hard and vigorously that Gray almost stumbled up the steepest slope.

Definitions: Age

By HENRI FAUST

Monotone the grey of rain-washed distances
where shadowy the close-shuttered trees
are stooped in sodden apathy,
having put forth no leaf at April
nor shed withered leaf at autumn:
for here is no coloured spring
burgeoning with sun-shifts of emerald
nor autumn binding reluctant sheaves
with quick deadfalls for defiant bloom,
but here is the circle straightened
the void outreaching and no wind.

Imagine the lens softened and peril
drained from the lurk of dissonant leaves,....
the neurons are leashed and deadened
to dance-figures once quick with pain;
on the stoop when days are ended,
days that are as rain-drops that merge,
age is a stooped old figure
with eyes blown out and nostrils
dead to white lilacs and rain.

The Borgias Walk in the Vatican Garden

By TENCH TILGMAN

The moonless, perfumed night rests like a pall
Upon the garden, and a faint wind stirs
The sombre leaves of cypresses; a mist
Creeps down the darkness of the paths and blurs

The flaring torches held by the Swiss guard
Standing in lines of brightly burnished steel
While down the echoing corridors the Pope
Walks, with his scarlet Cardinals at heel.

In a small chamber where a painted Christ
Watches in agony the subtle scene
Ferrara's Duke is waiting with his suite
To weave intrigue into a tangled skein.

Smiling a little wryly he has thanked
His Holiness for giving him the chance
By marrying his daughter to construct
A permanent alliance against France.

The Pontiff makes a suitable reply,
And contemplates with cold, hard eyes a ring
He wears, carved like a lion's head, whose teeth
Could send the Duke on a long journeying.

Meanwhile, along the opaque garden paths
Two shadows move, reflections in a glass,
Cesare and Lucrezia; marble gods
Smile rather curiously and watch them pass.

Cesare speaks:
"Lucrezia, I too dearly loved
Your scarlet beauty, but one must
Follow his destiny; we played
A perfect symphony of lust.

"They say, my sister, we have been
Incestuous. It may be so.
I loved you and our love has flowed
Fiercely, and now, when you must go

"With that pale, falsely-smiling Duke,
Think always of the mystery
Of this one hour and of Cesare
Who goes to seek his destiny.

"Ambition leads one on strange paths,
Lucrezia mia, I must go
Whither the gods direct, not caring
Whether the road leads high or low.

"My simar galled me; I have cast
It off. I only loved its red,
Bright as fresh blood upon a sword,
The blood a soldier-prelate shed.

"Sometimes on moonless nights I see
Francesco, wet with river-slime,
Gazing at me with burning eyes
And my heart fails me for a time.

"But 'tis no matter. He has blocked
My high road to success. He died.
Caesar or Nothing, I have said,
No man shall say that I have lied."

Lucrezia speaks:

"Cesare, in this scented darkness
I dimly see your gleaming eyes,
And hear your voice, a troubled music,
A music woven of faint sighs.

"Ah yes, Cesare, we have loved
Too madly, now the moment comes
When we must part. I go a duchess,
You seek your fate; a plucked lute hums

"The music for our parting. See
The sly Duke and His Holiness

Finish their talk and we must go
To find our share of loneliness.

“Remember, when the time comes, send
A word such as you always sent;
The Duke will drink one glass of wine
And go the way the others went.”

They vanish down the fragrant avenues
Still softly talking, and the gods have ceased
Their rather sombre smiling; they have seen
A human tragedy, baroque at least.

Sonnet of The Frail Fallacies

By ROYALL SNOW

Say that I cry:—“This girl is fairer
Than all sweet saints immortal in their paradise
Or fair dead queens in Hell reflowering!”
“Lover, Pygmalion,” you hint, “and helpless to compare her,
Quench radiance with radiance and so forswear her.”
And yet behold! the nobler woman seen of blinded eyes
Blooms triumphant outside of truth’s devouring
The while I dream, and mortal leprosies pass by and spare her.

Splendour of the moon on winter seas,
Bird music in a cage of sun-bright leaves:
We be pathetic fools of flesh, frail things are these,
Pale wind and space until the flesh perceives,
Creates the half-created in a splendid burst
And, parched for beauty, quenches its own thirst.

William Ellery Leonard

By HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

"These rhymes record, by quite unconscious plan,
What life from year to year may mean to man.

Scarce one but had its rise in common-place,
In old experience of the human race....
And yet not one without some How or When
No man on earth can ever feel again.
I made the record that I might be free
Through mastering art, lest life should master me....

Finding in art, creating as I went,
A world more luminous and eloquent.

—Preface to *The Vaunt of Man*

THE austere, uncompromising aspiration of the muse of William Ellery Leonard toward intellectual beauty is now, it seems, ironically enough to have her reward. *Two Lives* has been published for the trade. After some twenty years of neglect by the reading public at large, the name of the poet will perhaps become a subject of discussion among a certain part of the reading public, that part, probably, which perfers literary gossip to the ardors and endurances of literary art. I share with the English publishers the conviction that *Two Lives* is probably the best poem that has ever come out of America; but the greatness of the achievement will not, in all probability, pretermitt the opportunity for gossip which occurs with each new piece of confessional literature. One hopes that the supreme and painful beauty of the poem will afterwards win their way; and yet, remembering William Vaughn Moody, one is doubtful.

But to Mr. Leonard popularity for its own sake has never mattered. It is not that he does not desire to be

widely read by the intelligent; no man who has labored for twenty years to discover and express the meaning of life likes to be consistently ignored. But Mr. Leonard has never, in any one of his varying volumes in verse and prose, derogated from the high plane of accomplishment which he set himself in the *Sonnets and Poems* of 1906. Through neglect and bereavement, through the *peine forte et dure* of the long torture recorded and transformed in *The Lynching Bee* and *Two Lives*, he has as a writer persistently kept silence unless he could transform pain into beauty. Surely the annals of literature have few heroisms like this.

It is, it seems to me, time to arrive at some general estimate of Mr. Leonard, if indeed the time is not overpast. One difficulty is, obviously, the diversity and range of his powers. He is both thinker and poet; he brings aesthetic insight to the problems of scholarship, as he presses learning into the service of art. His command of languages, for instance, is beyond that of the average university professor, still struggling with French and German; Greek, Latin, Dutch, Old Norse, the Germanic dialects and languages, the orthodox modern tongues, Mr. Leonard moves easily in them all. He is profoundly versed in philosophies. He is keen and quick of perception in the currents of international thought. In consequence, his contributions to scholarship have been illumined and

sound. His book on *Byron and Byronism in America* is a record of the fabulous forties before Mr. Minnegerode had discovered them, and is still standard in the field. On the erudite subjects of the scansion of Beowulf, the Nibelungenlied and alliterative verse, what Mr. Leonard says receives attention in Europe. In that malformed work, the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, his chapter on Bryant is one of the green places in the volumes; it is more, it is the first thorough critical study of Bryant made in America, a study that cuts down to the very bone and sinew of Bryant's intellectual and moral nature to show us the man as he really is. For Leonard has a profound critical gift, too rarely exercised, largely, I suppose, because he has turned it into the fascinating and ungrateful fields of editing and translating.

Translation as an art has never received its due reward. Much translation, is of course, commercial hackwork, and Leonard has done his share of it, for I do not imagine that such a thing as his version of Sudermann's *Das Glueck im Winkel*, was a labor of love. Certainly it is uninspired, but then, so is the play. Indeed, the poet has always failed in the theater, where, frankly, he does not belong. *The Red Bird* (1923), a four-act drama, and *Glory of the Morning* (1912), a play in one act, have not added anything to his reputation, being, indeed, but two more failures in the unhappy history of attempts to dramatize the Amerindian. The causes of Leonard's failure here are patent; he will not sufficiently unbend to throw in the amount of hokum requisite for a stage success, and, like Browning, he is

a reflective poet by temperament: his plays do not "march." But let us return to his translations.

One who seeks to understand Leonard had, indeed, best begin with his major translations. I am not sure that they are not, with *Two Lives*, the outstanding and original part of him, interesting though the shorter verses may be. For to the difficult art of translation Leonard has brought all the vast resources of his literary and philosophical knowledge, his sure command of metres, and his keen feeling for high poetry. To run through the volumes he has completed in this genre is to understand his view of the world. These include his translation of Lucretius, his version of Beowulf "in rhymed verse;" the fragments of Empedocles; and *Aesop and Hyssop*, at once a *jeu d'esprit* and a wisdom book. In one way or another these various accomplishments have appealed to one or another side of him.

For if Leonard has translated Beowulf into the Nibelungen stanza, it is not because he is an English scholar, but because he finds in the old epic a correspondence to himself; finds there an expression of the grim, heroic spirit with which he faces living. The epic irony, the sardonic sense of fate, the biting, close-lipped lines—Beowulf confronting the hag, Beowulf face to face with his doom—it is in such scenes of foredoomed failure when all that is gallant and great in man shines out, that Leonard finds an ancient parallel to his own stark, heroic disillusion. The mood of Beowulf is the mood of *The Lynching Bee* and *A War Movie* and Tom Mooney, the mood of cold and smothered wrath in which Leonard

lived the manifold cruelties of the war years.

But if the Beowulf represents the mood of Leonard in certain moments, the translations of Lucretius and Empedocles correspond to the fundamental philosophy of his attitude; represent the lonely brain-work which, from painful books and painful living, has forged and hammered out a poetical metaphysic fit for modern men of science. No one, I suppose, will ever read through the whole of the Lucretius; and as Leonard is not the man to make an interlinear translation, the book will never be useful to college students. But every one should look into it. What he has done is to turn Lucretius into English blank verse as severe and disciplined as Lucretius himself. To comment on the felicities and the infelicities of Leonard's version is beyond the scope of this article, perhaps beyond the scope of the writer. Leonard is not easy reading; for that matter, neither is Lucretius; and it is possible that had he sought less for Roman compactness and more for English grace, the poem (for poem it remains) would have been better. Moreover I miss in Leonard (as perhaps one would in any translation) those startled spendors which in Lucretius burst forth ever and again to light up like Virey lights his lonely and magnificent landscape.

When one asks why Leonard has produced so unsaleable a book as his Lucretius, the answer is that for him it represents the payment of a debt of gratitude to his intellectual master. In form and thought he is a disciple of the great Roman. I turn, for instance, to

a second-rate poem of Leonard's, *Resolve*, and read:

There is an end. The fevers and the pain,
The craving unto life with that far hope
Of mornings and of twilights, seen by two,
Shall torture me no more. . . .

The Eternal Law
Works in all regions bringing light and dark.
It works in me. It makes in me an end
Even of the woe which it before had wrought,
And leads me to the springs beyond the mount,
Beyond all populous cities, where each man
Must flee when all is lost, and in myself
I find at last the rod which strikes the rock
Of living water.

This is the true Lucretian spirit, that ancient, that pagan spirit of acquiescence in the course of things that Leonard has had for cold comfort in his bleaker moments. "Man's mind," he writes, "is larger than his brow of tears," and he could well afford to quote, though with altered meaning, the beautiful and arrogant sentences from Joseph Glanville which Poe placed at the head of *Ligeia*:

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not.
Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with
its vigor? For God is but a great will per-
vading all things by nature of its intentness.
Man doth not yield himself to the angels,
nor unto death utterly, save only through
the weakness of his feeble will.

This spirit of endurance, this "vaunt of man" which I have called the Lucretian spirit, is fundamental in Leonard. It is the key to the temper of his mind. For he is, unlike many poets, an intelligent man. He has drunk deeply of science, too deeply to attempt any shallow reconciliation of science and religion. In a sonnet in *The Vaunt of Man* he takes regretful farewell of the old gods as Arnold did, except that, unlike Arnold, it is not doubt but conviction that drives him out of Christianity:

"New dawns shall come, but I shall read the
 mass
 No more, nor face Thy cross, O Christ, nor
 ring
 The silver bell, nor golden censer swing
 Down fuming aisles, God's angel as I pass,
 Between the high saints in cathedral glass,
 No more, nor never mellow Aves sing
 At twilight, when the weary people bring
 The long day's burden through the gates of
 brass
 To Mary Mother. Ah, new dawns shall come,
 New eves shall follow; but it is my grief
 Of dawns, of eves, to have attained the sum
 In love and vision: in mine unbelief
 I leave God's house, like Zacharias, dumb,
 Nor hold, as he, God's promise of relief."

He sings instead primordial earth, he sings Nature the great mother (compare Lucretius' Venus genetrix), he sings, like Meredith, the armies of unalterable law. It is cold comfort, it will not appeal to readers accustomed to sink comfortably to sleep on the rock of ages, but it is Leonard's philosophy, a philosophy which has been more cruelly tested than the faith of most Christians as *Two Lives* is there to testify. How cruel was the ordeal he tells us in a sonnet of that painful poem, a sonnet almost prose in its simplicity, but how fearful in its context!

"That once the gentle mind of my dead wife
 Did love that fiery Roman (dead like her)—
 Lucretius and his vast hexameter—
 I number with the ironies of life.
 That I, who turned his Latin verse to mine
 For her, the while she typed each page for me,
 Should, in my English, just have reached that
 life
 Fourth from the end of the Book of Death
 (Book Three),
 When Death rode out for her—was that
 design?—
 If so, of God or Devil?—the line which saith,
 'O Mors aeterna—O eternal Death!—
 The last, last letters she fingered key by
 key! . . .
 But when, long after, I had wrought the rest,
 I said these verses, walking down the west."

But the complexities of a man's thinking are not to be solved by dismissing him as a modern Lucretian. Leo-

nard is not alone pagan but modern; not only thinker but poet. What satisfied the poet in Lucretius was apparently his own dilating imagination. But Leonard, though he is like the Roman in his attempt to subsume all science under the aspect of poetry, is yet the child of an age which believes, however crazily, in progress. Here he resembles Josiah Royce. No intelligent man, of course, can think progress except in terms of painful endeavor. Leonard has the concomitant, dubious hope that goes with such realization:

"I know how ineradically absurd
 That Man is but a function of the Two,
 Physics and Chemistry—that we can spell
 By atom and motion (or by twitch and cell)
 The ineffable Adventure I've been through. . .
 I know Love, Pain, and Power are spirit-
 things,
 My Act a more than Mine or Now or Near:
 One with the Will that suffers, conquers,
 sings.
 I was the mystic Voice I could not hear."

Yet, as he tells us in the very last lines of the same poem (*Two Lives*),

"We dare not think too long on those who
 died,
 While still so many yet must come to birth."

The hungry generations tread him down; and though in Prayer to the Man Bird he hopes that aviation means peace, though he hymns in sonnet upon sonnet the triumphs of Man's immortal mind, he is too conscious of man's cruelty to have faith in aught but a sad sincerity. It is *The Lynching Bee and Other Poems* that cries out most harshly against the brutality and anger of mankind. *The Lynching Bee* is the most terrible indictment of a civilization ever penned by an American poet. To read it is to sear the mind with its unforgettable horror. It is, indeed, a great achievement, but it is not great

art, it plays too painfully upon the taut nerves. But it shows what painful hells Leonard has explored.

In intention Leonard is, then, a philosophical poet. He belongs with George Santayana, not with Vachel Lindsay. But it would do him wrong to imagine that he had no singing gift. There is in him a quiet, limpid lyricism which has had too few opportunities to find its way forth. Thought and music marry in so simple and direct a poem as *The Steamer*:

"The steamer plows the middle sea
With smoke behind and foam before;
And through whatever nights there be
She anchors not from shore to shore:

Though head winds smite her onward form,
And waves from east to west be hurled,
Though ocean stars be hid in storm
Beyond the glimpses of the world,

Her needle tells the unseen path,
Eternal law to her desire;
And her unconquered speed she hath
In quenchless heart of flame and fire."

Except the last line (which is, for Leonard, mere verbiage) this is his lyric level; he can arise above it, as we shall see. Yet even here one notes the reflective tone, the concern with the machinery of the universe, a concern that has led him to attempt in verse themes that are simply and impossibly unpoetic.

One can understand his writing poems to the late Senator La Follette and even to Kaiser Wilhelm (whom he once praised!). But trains and machinery, the Darwinian theory and the nebular hypothesis, chemistry and psychology do not always fuse into song. Because he is one who writes austere, he is capable of writing baldly; he mistakes thought for music, reference for poetry. The sonnets on Tutankha-

men, though they gripped the poet's attention, simply do not come off; the series on Shakespeare would make an admirable critical article in prose. It is a relief to remember that the same slim volume contains the singing and perfect lines, *Flight of Crows*, which is, I think, the most perfect of his lesser poems. There is room for at least the opening stanza:

"Out of the chaos of sunset, the one white star
and the silence,
Far in the fiery dusk, off at the ends of
the world,
Out of the lavender twilight of misty October
horizons,
Bursts, like a birth in the skies, swarming
the legion of crows;
Onward and over the valley, and strangely
perturbed in their winging
Bigger and blacker they stream, cawing in
answer to caw.
So I have noted in April the wild-geese honk-
ing to northward,
Only in loftier air, up in the blue and the
day. . . .
Morning and night and the seasons, and ever
the ancient migrations,
While, for his hour, a man . . . stands on
a hill as they pass."

All that has been said, however, is but introductory to the great work of Leonard's life and experience, *Two Lives*, certainly the most marvelous long poem in technical achievement, in sincerity, in truth, in high and beautiful accomplishment, yet written by an American poet. It is the product of twelve years; it has been revised and re-written; it has been withheld from publication because of the intimate nature of its subject; and it has at length appeared in print for the understanding and the misunderstanding of men. Into it Leonard has poured his life's experience, his tender and his stern philosophy, the smothered emotional wealth of a man misunderstood, of a college professor denied passionate out-

let. It is the one book, I imagine, by which he wishes to be measured. By the side of it, all else he has done sinks into insignificance. Of it and of him one can say with Carlyle, Eccovi, this child has been in hell.

One scarcely knows how to deal with a production at once so epic and so personal. Merely to detail "the story" would be to miss the beauty and the tenderness and the pain. It is the revelation of the very core and fibre of a man during the whole story of his courtship and marriage, the growing insanity of his wife, her attempt at suicide, her death, and the slow recovery of the poet's mental health during the long months of misunderstanding and even hatred of those nearest and dearest to him and to her. It is of course to be said, tenderly and reverently, that the story is Leonard's own story, transfigured and eternized under the aspect of art. In the midst of his search for a philosophy, these very things came to him. We infer what love was for Dante and Rossetti; but to read this poem is to enter the veriest holy of holies of love and marriage. It is a great, a tragic, a painful, a triumphal revelation of the meanness and nobility, the strange waywardness and resolves of men and women, and of the crass casualty of existence.

Two Lives raises an infinitude of artistic problems and solves them all. There is of course the question of taste. The many-headed multitude may, it is possible, pass harsh judgment on a poet who tells the listening world that his wife went insane, that he was supposed by her kindred and friends to

have driven her insane. But the many-headed multitude is not likely to read two hundred sonnets in search of scandal, nor will it wade willingly through a poem which quotes Greek and German and Latin, and deals with medical theories and discoveries in philology and psychology and physics. Then there is the more subtle question of the proprietary rights of the survivors from this tragedy, to silence. But as Mr. Leonard has waited for twelve years to justify himself (in the vulgar sense), and as most of the people concerned are now dead, no harm is done; what they might say of Mr. Leonard is forgotten—what Mr. Leonard has said of *them* is carved in marble. Some three years ago Mr. Leonard tentatively printed a hundred copies of the poem, largely, I think, to try out the question of taste; the response indicates that when a great work of art appears, little minds had best get out of the way. Mr. Leonard's dealing with the situation has been exquisitely right.

Then there is the question of the nature of the revelation made. As I have indicated the poem deals in the most intimate matters of marriage. The reader who expects another Rousseau's confessions, will, it is true, be cheated. But one remembers how Rossetti, great artist though he was, failed here and there in *The House of Life*; in that magnificent and growing chaplet of beauty there are sonnets which leave one feeling a little uneasy. But Mr. Leonard passes triumphantly where lesser men would have failed; his long training with the reticent masters has left him with his reticences even here; and intimate as the poem is, its char-

acters live in that serene abode where the eternal are.

A third problem is that of form. *Two Lives* is a sonnet sequence of over two hundred sonnets. The form is, indeed, Leonard's favorite; it exactly suits with his reflective and lapidary mind. When, however, the two hundred sonnets are to "tell a story," and a story, moreover, from which Henry James would have shrunk in prose, one may tremble for so perilous an enterprise. Again, Leonard comes through the ordeal. The solution is unique. In his hands the sonnet becomes simply a stanza form, alike capable of rapid events, of reflection, of anguish, of prose, of lyric rapture. It is the highest technical achievement in American verse.

Then there is the problem of dealing with the familiar, the prosaic, the common in a form traditionally associated with stateliness in thought and diction. In such a transcript of life there must be room for college yells and chiffoniers, mandolins and housebuildings, doctors and student roomers, sweaters and a squabble over house work, and all such must be fused somehow with Cosmic Rhythm and lyric beauty and love and death. How Leonard accomplishes this is a miracle to see; only genius,

only a sad sincerity (the phrase recurs always when thinking of the poem), only the awful directness of the events could accomplish what he does.

But all words fail before this achievement. The curious may read in the back of *Tutankhamen and After* what critics of international standing have stumbingly said of the manuscript version of the poem. Leonard, who can not do certain things, who can not accomplish the speed and richness of Swinburne, or the point and decoration of Rossetti, who is alike removed from Herrick and Miss Millay, can yet accomplish what is beyond the performance of any other American poet now alive, a poem that is stamped, page by page, with the accent of greatness. *Two Lives*, I venture to prophesy, will become one of the great intimate revelations of the world, one of those glimpses into the height and depth and beauty and tragedy of living, its pain of frustrated desires, its lonely heroisms, its bravery and defeat, which men do not willingly let die. For the book is written, as Leonard has elsewhere written out of sheer necessity:

"I made the record that I might be free
Through mastering art, lest life should master
me."

In *Two Lives* he is the master of both life and art.

He Visits An Oculist

By JAMES FEIBLEMAN

Who sees a nimbus in his own reflection
Has mates for my two eyes, whose sole infection
Makes such a grace of me and others, asses
That I am slow to blind myself with glasses.

Havana Sonnet

By GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Not you, not I, not any one of us
Drifted here along the Malecon
Like so much coral in the querulous
Wash of the sea against the bastion
May say with any knowledge why we are
Here, and not there; this hour, and not the next.
Why we are soothed, made arrogant, perplexed;
Called to dominion, harassed by a star.

I hold you close. I take your kiss, your sigh.
The bougainvilleae winding at our wrist
Are scarlet—and tomorrow we may die
Calling on some small god through a tall mist.
And all the while as futilely a flower,
Not yet blowing, plots in the earth its hour.

Questioning

By J. HAMILTON BASSO

Did he stand in the Globe's deserted place
When only the refuse of the mob was left,
Hearing still the munch of apples as the sad Prince
Spoke his soul . . . did any tears rinse
The eyes that looked in Ann's . . . dejection frown his face . . .

Then, suddenly, were the shadows cleft
By a sweep of stinging laughter that the walls gave
Back in mouthing echoes, as he recalled the thunder
Of approbation that split each throat asunder
When two bright swords clashed in Ophelia's grave?

Bloated Cracker

By ALLEN WALKER REED

Someone dropped a crisp young cracker
beside my front walk yesterday.
But now the dews,
for all their transparency,
have bloated it,
and its bleared sides
bulge
in poddy sogginess.

If it could have stayed home
in its cool cupboard,
away from the dampness
lurking in the grasses beneath,
its nine regular eyes,
with their chubby cheeks between,
might still allure some child.

It saw a comet,
and three falling stars
But what are they worth?

Vision

By E. D. TODD

What ghastly flatness is the world,
What causes lost, what banners furled
Unless we dream. The dreamer's star
Is mightiest, his visions are
Far pinnacles, his altars glow.—
Shall not a tailor's needle grow
As great as lost Excalibur,
And serfs achieve the knightly spur?

The Function of Literary Criticism

By RAYMOND F. HOWES

RODIN, it is said, was fond of telling his pupils that there are only two kinds of art—good art and bad art. If the distinction were as clear as that, if it were possible, with one wave of the wand, to assign a given production to a sort of artistic Elysium or Tartarus, the work of the critic would be greatly simplified. But unhappily, or perhaps happily, no one has yet been able to invent a satisfactory formula on which such a dogmatic division can be made. Especially in an age such as ours, when even the moralists are beginning to admit the fallibility of the Ten Commandments, such a generalization is apt to be labeled ridiculous.

In art, indeed, the problem is far more varied and complex than in the field of morality, for the rules governing standard morality are relatively fixed, while those of artistic creation have never been satisfactorily determined. Broadly speaking, there are two notions that have dominated the age-old controversy as to what constitutes art. On the one hand we have Aristotle declaring that "art is a habit of production in conscious accordance with a correct method," and on the other we find Walter Pater lauding Wordsworth for adhering to "that sincerity, that perfect fidelity to one's own inward presentations, to the precise features of the picture within." Where Aristotle's definition assumes that art is primarily objective, Pater's asserts that it is to a great extent sub-

jective, that, in the words of Jules Dupre, "art passing through the individual is the goal."

The definition of Aristotle applies with some force, perhaps, to painting and sculpture, where technique has been to some extent standardized. But even then it is not sufficient, for works of admitted technical perfection have often fallen short of fine art. Who can forget Andrea del Sarto, the "faultless painter," and his agonized comment on the work of Raphael?

"That arm is wrongly put....and there again....

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines....
It's body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right....that, a child may understand.

Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch..
Out of me, out of me!"

If, then, the art of painting is so little a matter of mechanics, how much less so is the art of writing. Where painting appeals to the eye, and music to the ear, literature, perhaps less directly, must do both. And further, while arousing emotion through the creation of sensuous images, it must stimulate the intellect. It is little wonder that we have come to consider the art of writing dependent, more than any other art, upon individuality, and to agree with Pater that "just in proportion as the writer's aim, consciously or unconsciously, comes to be the transcribing, not of the world, not of mere fact, but of his sense of it, he becomes an artist, his work fine art."

The acceptance of this premise leads directly to the conclusion that it is not the prerogative of the critic to quarrel with the aim of an author. His province is to determine first, what the author is attempting to do; second, what means he has employed to that end; and third, how well he has succeeded. To limit the field of the critic in this way has several important implications. It implies, in the first place, understanding and tolerance; it means that we accept Wordsworth's dictum that the only way to criticize a poet is to love him. It implies further that it is beyond the critic's sphere broadly to deprecate romanticism as contrasted with realism, or the heroic couplet as compared with blank verse. And it implies that in giving a writer tentative rank, that rank shall be made with reference only to other writers whose aims are similar.

To say that it implies tolerance of aim does not mean that the critic must seek only sweetness and light, or accept as his motto the epigram of Mark Twain: "There is that about the sun which makes us forget his spots." But it does mean that the critic goes beyond his province when he attempts to prove that Pope is not a great poet because he does not write like Wordsworth, or that Dickens is a poorer novelist than Thackeray because he sees men as caricatures. The only question properly before the critic is whether Pope, using the medium at hand, attained the object at which he aimed, or whether Dickens, attempting to present a series of caricatures, did it with success.

Walter Bagehot, in his essay on Dickens, has the following remark: "How-

ever great may be and is the charm of such exaggerated personifications, the best specimens of them are immensely less excellent, belong to an altogether lower range of intellectual achievements, than the real depiction of actual living men." Professor Phelps, incensed at this attack on one of his favorite authors, retorts that the characters of Dickens *are* actual living men, and not, as Bagehot charges, exaggerated personifications. Such a controversy, in the light of our definition of art as the transcribing, not of fact, but of the author's sense of it, becomes little less than ridiculous. If, as most critics agree, Dickens saw society as a collection of eccentric characters, and chose to depict it in that way, what right has anyone to quarrel with him? Is not his sense of fact as authentic, as sincere, as that of Bagehot? If Bagehot prefers Thackeray, it is his own affair, a matter of his personal literary taste. But it is not his business as a judicial critic to make his own taste the criterion of Dickens's art. If he admits, as many do, that Dickens drew caricatures better than any other writer who ever lived, he has said enough, has placed that author where he belongs, at the head of the particular group with whom he chose to compete.

Hardy sees life as a struggle between men and environment in which environment invariably triumphs. A pessimistic view, truly. But if he expresses it brilliantly, convincingly, that should be enough. The critic may, if he will, point out the implications, or trace the influences which led Hardy to think as he does, but it is not for him dogmatically to assert that Hardy's

philosophy of life, his sense of facts, is right or wrong. An author has an inalienable right to his own philosophy.

Lytton Strachey, in an excellent essay on Racine, relates the details of a controversy between French and English critics as to the relative literary greatness of this playwright and Shakespeare. Obviously, no result of any importance was possible. Racine, as Strachey points out, did not employ, did not attempt to employ, the Romantic method of portraying life. His method was entirely different, so different, that it offers no sensible basis for comparison. The English critic contended that Racine's dramas were not true to life; the Frenchman retorted that neither were Shakespeare's. Both were right. Yet each dramatist was true to his own sense of fact, and wrote with such felicity, using his own peculiar mode of expression, as to be acclaimed an artist. It happens that literary taste in France at the time was more favorable to the French artist, and literary taste in England more appreciative of the English. The obvious conclusion is that the controversy hinged purely on taste, and was not concerned with anything within the legitimate province of criticism. Yet it is this sort of controversy that has played so great a part in the history of literature, and has brought literary criticism, from time to time, into disrepute.

No artist, no matter how great his

genius, can depict life exactly as it is, and it is extremely doubtful whether the result, if possible, would be particularly valuable. Hence the critic is under the obligation of accepting a given author's sense of fact, his philosophy of life, as authentic and sincere. He is perfectly free, once he has a sympathetic understanding of his author's aim, to criticize his method as applied to that aim, but not to compare it with the work of others whose aims and methods are different. When he attempts the latter he departs from the realm of criticism and enters that of personal taste. Impressionistic criticism is laudable and valuable when directed toward the works of an individual; when used as a method of comparison it becomes, for the purposes of authentic valuation, worthless.

If Pope be the greatest poet of his particular group, let the critic prove it, and cease his labors. If Dickens be the greatest caricaturist, Thackeray the greatest realist, Shakespeare the greatest Romantic dramatist, Racine the foremost playwright of his particular school, let the critic make these things plain. If there is controversy on these points, let him argue, according to his knowledge and judgment. In these fields he is at home. But when he enters the province of pure taste, when he attempts to rank all literature according to his own particular standard, he begins, inevitably, to flounder, mistaking, as Schopenhauer says, his own toy trumpet for the trombone of fame.

Tropical Fragment

By JOSEPH HILTON SMYTH

Moonlight
 dripped
from plantain
 trees
flowed in undulating ripples over your body of brown
I was afloat.

Seven thousand and seven
puritanical ancestors
turned
 twice
in their graves
 to the discomfiture
of many worms.

The Passing of Methusaleh

By HERBERT DRENNON

Methusaleh heaved his chest with rasping ruckles,
 His great white beard was quivering in the breeze;
And now and then he thumped his bony knuckles
 Against the withered skin of his bare knees.
His daubed hut was filled with desert flies
 That circled rings about his time-peeled head,
And sang protestingly their faint outcries
 Against this man whose blood had lost its red.

His centuried dreams that had dried like peas in pods
 Slept with his thousand sons, and daughters too;
And his olive and berry girls of youth had fled.
 "Build ye a gopher ark." Methusaleh nods;
His Ancient of Days was coming again to woo,
 And down came the rain as over the hills he sped.

Witches' Dance

By F. MERLE CONSTINER

The moor-moon lags as it creeps through the poplars;
 (On steeds of laughter they stagger windward).
Faintly the tree shafts glow with a softness;
 (Beelzebub's chargers, battered from metal).

"Blow. Our breasts are starved," they sigh.
 "Sired by the grief of a nightingale's notes,
Damed by a lute, blow us high.
 Our bodies are aching. The moor-moon floats."

The husbandman sleeps restlessly. The dank
Steals from the hearth up to the withered embers
To join the chimney's wind. The flank
Quivering in the fold, fears silver fingers.

"Cleaness of earth begone as we ride to battle,
 Our bellies white are bracing the moon from the sky.
Spirit of love and sadness, spirit of cattle,
 Our lips dripping love, kissed by our fingers, die."

Night

By ROYALL SNOW

My spirit like a sword
Leaps from the scabbard of the body:
The night is but a negro giant
Sundered by the blade
So that I see its heart pulsating
Like a bloody star.
Diastole it beats, and systole,
And revelation like great heat
Tempers the unsheathed blade.

Walt Whitman in New Orleans

By JOHN S. KENDALL

ONE of the most interesting and least-known episodes in the literary history of New Orleans is supplied by the residence in this city of Walt Whitman, the poet, who was for some months, in 1848, a member of the editorial staff of one of the local newspapers. Whitman, who was almost disconcertingly candid about certain incidents in his early, vagabond years, has said little about this New Orleans visit. Nevertheless, it must have been of considerable importance in shaping his character and determining the nature of his literary activities; for not only did it broaden his knowledge of the country, but because here was born one of the six children of whom the poet confessed himself father. Whitman's biographers have been able to throw very little light upon this latter, romantic matter, nor is it likely that now, when all are dead who knew the "good grey poet" when he was neither good nor grey, we shall ever know the details of what was apparently a real love-story. But otherwise, in the files of old newspapers, one finds material enough to furnish forth, in some completeness, the whole New Orleans episode.

Before coming to New Orleans Whitman had been for some time earning a rather precarious livelihood in journalism. New Orleans was about 1848 one of the most important news-centers in the United States. During the Mexican war it was a point for the embarkation of troops destined for service in Mexico. Officers and soldiers were con-

stantly passing through the city on their way back from the scene of conflict. The news of the American victories reached New Orleans long before it was known in the other cities of the nation. When the treaty of peace was signed which brought the war to a close, it was a New Orleans newspaper that informed the President of the United States of the interesting fact. From a journalistic point of view, indeed, these were the great days of the city. Everything seemed to indicate the continuance of the favorable conditions, and a number of newspapers sprang up to dispute with the "Picayune" the possession of the field.

Among these was the "Crescent." The first number of this paper appeared on March 6, 1848. Its editors were A. H. Haynes and J. C. McClure. Both of them were graduates of the "Picayune" office. Haynes had been for a long time foreman of the composing room of that wealthy and celebrated journal. McClure had had some experience in what was called the "business office." Both were able exponents of the kind of journalism which existed in New Orleans in those days—a journalism very different from what we now understand by the term. In 1848 editors were expected to be something more than editors. They were leaders in other fields, as well; sometimes in stock-raising, as witness G. W. Kendall's fame as a ranchman and sheep-breeder; sometimes in statescraft, as witness Col. William Walker, that

strange and romantic figure in Central American history; or in sports, as witness Holbrook, who was long the prop and stay of the Jockey Club. But most of all they were politicians. It was they who drew up the platforms and addresses issued by the political parties honored by their preference. Not infrequently they composed the speeches and letters of their candidates. Indeed, it may be questioned if their duties as newspaper-men were, more often than not, subordinated to their interests as party chieftains.

Naturally, it did not strike these picturesque persons that what we today call "local" news merited more than the briefest and most casual attention at their hands. Their columns were filled with grave political dissertations and eulogies of their political friends. The less dignified members of the staff might contribute something in the way of what we nowadays call "sketch-writing," but even they did not sin on the side of industry. As a consequence, the careers of these men were generally brief—briefer even than those of their journals, which only occasionally enjoyed a decade of existence. Sometimes they perished in duels; sometimes they fell victims to the murderous ire of some opponent, professional or otherwise, stung to desperation by savage editorial denunciation; very often they escaped from the profession into some governmental position, and spent the rest of their lives, more or less comfortably, in the enjoyment of the reward of their partisan activities.

At this period the principal New Orleans newspapers were the "Picayune," the "Delta," the "Tropic" and the "True Delta." There were others, but these

were the ones which really counted for something. The Picayune was founded in 1837, and became internationally famous as a result of the enterprise of its editors in reporting the Mexican War. The Delta was established two or three years later by a quartette of seceders from the Picayune, among whom were Haynes and McClure. These papers, and the "Crescent" after them, commanded the services of a group of very brilliant men. There was, for instance, Denny Corcoran, who was a sort of general utility man, capable of filling any editorial or reportorial position where his services were needed. He was a man of vast attainments, as familiar with sporting and theatrical matters as with foreign literature and local politics. His sketches published in the Picayune were republished, some years later, in a little volume entitled "Pickings from the Portfolio of the Reporter of the Picayune," which, with its illustrations by F. O. C. Darley, is one of the curiosities of American literature. And there were Donelson Caffery Jenkins and Joseph Brannan; Edward William Johnston, a brother of the Confederate general, Albert Sidney of that name; J. W. F. Frost, Judge Henry Bullard, J. O. Nixon, John C. Larue, S. F. Wilson, Colonel McCardle, and Dr. Hu. Kennedy—to mention only a few names chosen more or less at random.

Nor were these men mere local celebrities. Johnston, for instance, was at one time editor of the National Intelligencer, at Washington. Frost was an able writer, whose views of literature and art were worth while. He was killed in a duel as a result of a newspaper controversy. Hu. Kennedy, after

editing the "True Delta" with considerable success, became conspicuous in the politics of the Reconstruction Era, and was for a time mayor of New Orleans, under the military regime of the '60s and '70s. McCardle was a master of the sesquipedalian phraseology and remorseless invective which were so much admired in those days. Even Putnam Rea, who edited the inoffensive *Commercial Bulletin*, and limited himself to the discussion of weather and crops, was a man of real ability and authority in his field. The Civil War worked havoc amongst them and their newspapers. When the smoke of conflict cleared away, about 1865, the *Picayune* was the only survivor; and of the galaxy of names which we have cited, hardly one remained in the list of active New Orleans journalism.

Such, in broad outlines, was the situation which Whitman encountered when he arrived in New Orleans. The poet came down to New Orleans overland from New York City. He had been acting for over a year as editor of the Brooklyn "Eagle," but as a result of a difficulty with the leader of the local Democracy, he lost that position. It was at this juncture that he met McClure, of the *Crescent*, just then in the north buying type and machinery for his paper. "Being now out of a job," says Whitman, in a fragment of autobiography contributed years after to the Camden, N. J., *Courier*, "I was offered impromptu (it happened between the acts one night in the lobby of the old Broadway Theater, near Pearl street, New York City) a good chance to go down to New Orleans on the staff of the *Crescent*, a daily to be started there with plenty of capital behind it,

in opposition to the *Picayune*. One of the owners....met me walking in the lobby, and though that was our first acquaintance, after fifteen minutes' talk (and a drink) we made a formal bargain and Mr. McClure paid me \$200 down to bind the contract and bear my expenses to New Orleans." Whitman started two days afterwards, taking along his brother, Jeff, then a boy of fifteen. The *Crescent* was not to begin publication for three or four weeks; consequently, there was no need of haste, and they made a leisurely journey by way of Pennsylvania and Virginia, crossing the Alleghenies, and taking a steamer down the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers.

Whitman's first journalistic work in New Orleans was a series of articles in which he describes this trip. The first of them appeared in the inaugural number of the *Crescent*, and though unsigned, is obviously his work. The other articles appeared at irregular intervals thereafter, steadily decreasing in length and interest till March 10th, when the last—a description of life on the Ohio—was printed. These articles appeared under the general title "Excerpts from a Traveller's Note Book." They discuss the things which were always of prime interest to Whitman—the doings of people, the odds and ends of humanity, who traverse the world, and the incidents of life afloat and ashore. Aside from the interest which the story has as a part of the biography of the poet, it is worth while to give rather a full account of his trip down to New Orleans and back to New York; because times have changed in no way in America so startlingly as in regard

to transportation; and we get from Whitman's rather slovenly record a glimpse of the tedium and discomfort which attended such journeys in our grandfather's day.

The poet and his little companion left Baltimore on the railroad and went directly to Cumberland, at the foot of the Alleghanies, a distance of 170 miles. Cumberland was then a place of importance; its name is hardly known today. The scene which met his eyes as he left the railroad car in this little town impressed Whitman greatly. "Cumberland," he says, "at which we arrived about sunset, is a thriving town, with several public edifices, a newspaper or two, and those invariably to be found in every western and southern community, some 'big hotels.' The town has a peculiar character from its being the great rendezvous and ending place of the immense Pennsylvania wagons and the drivers from hundreds of miles west. You may see the Tartar-looking group of these wagons and their drivers, in the open grounds about—the horses being loosed—and the whole having not a little the appearance of a caravan in the steppes. Hundreds and hundreds of these enormous vehicles, with their arched roofs of white canvas, wend their way into Cumberland from all quarters during a busy season, with goods to send on eastward, and to take goods brought by the railroad. They are in shape not a little like the Chinese 'junk' erstwhile exhibited in New York—being built high at each end and scooping down in the waist. With their teams of four or six horses, they carry an almost incalculable quantity of freight, and if one should acci-

dentally get in the road ruts before their formidable wheels, they would perform the work of Juggernaut upon him in most effectual order. The drivers of these vehicles and the droves of cattle, hogs, horses, etc., in this section of the land, form a large slice of 'society.' "

The Whitmans crossed the Alleghanies by night. They occupied seats in "one of the several four-horse stage coaches of the National Road and Good Intent Stage Co.," for which they had purchased tickets in Philadelphia, at \$13 each. The departure from Cumberland was something of a ceremony. The passengers' names were written down; a clerk called each in turn, and two or three negroes placed the baggage in turn on a "patent weighing machine;" if the weight exceeded 50 pounds, there was an excess-fee to be paid. Then "they boxed us in the coach, nine precious souls, and we dashed through the town and up the mountains." The ensuing day was spent in dreary stages from Uniontown onward, and Wheeling was reached a little after 10 o'clock, Sunday night. Whitman was deeply impressed with the character of the people whom he met. "Though prepared to find a shrewd population as I journeyed to the interior, and down the great rivers," he says, "I was by no means prepared for the sterling vein of common sense that seemed to pervade them—even the roughest shod and roughest clad of them all. . . . I fully believe that in a comparison of actual manliness and what the Yankees call 'gumption,' the well-to-do citizens (for I am not speaking of the country) particularly the young men of New York,

Philadelphia, Boston, Brooklyn, and so on, with all the advantages of compact neighborhood, schools, etc., are not up to the men of the West. Among the latter, probably, attention is more turned to the realities of life, and a habit formed of thinking for one's self; in the cities, frippery and artificial fashion are too much the prevailing powers."

At Wheeling the travelers went on board the river steamer, *St. Cloud*, "a freight and packet boat, lying at the wharf there with the steam all up and ultimately bound for New Orleans." It was, apparently, the first time Whitman had ever seen a vessel of the sort. The boat itself had his unqualified approval, but he did not approve of the easy-going way in which it was operated, nor of the habits of his fellow passengers. "The long cabin neatly carpented and lit by clusters of handsome lamps, had no uncomfortable look," he says in one place; and elsewhere he refers to the meals with something almost like enthusiasm: the quantity of food was enormous, and the quality "first rate." But everybody ate in haste, "gulped down their food with railroad speed," and breakfast was dispatched in five minutes. As there was then nothing to do except to wait for dinner, Whitman expresses wonder at this unseemly speed as well as the ill-spent leisure which followed. Any kind of reading matter was in demand, but the great interest of the slow-moving hours was the landings, of which there were many. "At the stopping places on the Kentucky side," he writes, "appeared great numbers of tall, strapping, comely young men. At the stopping places on

the northern shore, there seems to be more thrift and activity."

The master of the vessel carried on a considerable business of his own at these landings, buying up all manner of articles, to sell again lower down the river. The *St. Cloud* left Wheeling with a large general cargo, but this was soon augmented by several hundred barrels of pork, lard, and "an uncounted (by me) lot of flour—enough, though, it seemed, to feed half the office-holders of the land; bags of coffee, leather, groceries, dry goods, coops of poultry, a horse and a dog." Because of the time consumed in these purchases, the *St. Cloud's* progress was slow. "To one who beholds steamboat life on the Ohio for the first time, there will, of course, be many fresh features and notable transpirings," remarks Whitman. "One of the first and most unpleasant is the want of punctuality in departing from places and, consequently, the same want in arriving at them. All the steamers carry freight, that, indeed, being their principal business and source of profit, to which the accommodation of passengers (as far as time is concerned) has to stand secondary." But after night-fall, when the travelers foregathered in the cabin, there must have been some agreeable moments. "The two large tables... were surrounded by readers, and the stove, by smokers and talkers. The ladies appear to have rather a dull time of it." They sat apart from the men, both by day and at night, "listlessly doing nothing, and apparently saying nothing."

The "*St. Cloud*" stopped some time in Cincinnati and Cairo. The former he regarded as a dirty little place, but very

prosperous. "It may be doubted if any city in Christendom can show a more plentiful, or cheaper, supply of what are termed 'provisions!'" Whitman notes that a pair of the "fattest sort of chickens" could be bought in the market for 25 cents. "With New York and New Orleans, he says, by way of dismissal, "Cincinnati undoubtedly makes the trio of business places in the republic—though Philadelphia must not be forgotten, either." Whitman did not foresee much of a future for Cairo. "Immense sums of money have been spent to make Cairo something like what a place with such a name ought to be. But with the exception of its position, which unrivalled for business purposes, everything about it seems unfortunate. The point on which it is situated is low and liable to be overflowed at every high flood. Besides, it is unwholesomely wet at the best. It is doubtful if Cairo will ever be any 'great shakes,' except in the way of ague." The falls of the Ohio were crossed just as the Lachine Rapids, in the St. Lawrence, are crossed today by tourists, and the incident was exceedingly interesting to the poet, suggesting him the desirability of a possible connecting canal. The country below Louisville evoked from Whitman only the remark that it was low and monotonous.

These quotations tell us all that we are ever likely to know of the poet's journey to New Orleans. The middle and south were then only at the inception of their magnificence, and though the impression made on his observant mind was for the most part that of a crude and undeveloped community,

Whitman was too shrewd and intelligent not to perceive the promise of future prosperity and greatness. There is nothing in Whitman's contributions to the *Crescent* descriptive of his journey down the Mississippi. In fact, the series breaks off somewhat abruptly. We find, however, in the advertising columns of the New Orleans papers, the *St. Cloud* entered as arriving from Wheeling on February 26th; which date may be accepted as that of the poet's advent in New Orleans. He found lodgings, not in New Orleans proper, but in the suburban town of Lafayette. Lafayette has long since been absorbed into New Orleans. With whom the visitors lodged it is impossible now to say, but from a remark in one of his contributions to the *Crescent* we may assume that his quarters were small, though apparently ample for one of his vagrant disposition. He kept late hours and took no part in such social life as Lafayette afforded; indeed, the town was largely settled up by foreigners, Germans and Irish, interested in the cattle business; and Whitman preferred the attractions of the city itself. His impression of New Orleans have been preserved for us in an article which he wrote, nearly forty years later, for the *Picayune*:

"Probably the influence most deeply pervading everything at that time through the United States, both in physical facts and in sentiment, was the Mexican war, then near its end. Following a brilliant campaign (in which our troops had marched to the capital city, Mexico, and taken full possession), we were returning after our victory. From the situation of the

country, the city of New Orleans had been our channel and *entrepot* for every thing, going and returning. It had the best news and war correspondents; it had the most to say through its leading papers, the *Picayune* especially, and its voice was readiest listened to; from it 'Chapparal' had gone out, and his army and battle letters were copied everywhere, not only in the United States but in Europe. Then the social cast and results; no one who has not seen the society of a city under similar circumstances can understand what a strange vivacity and rattle were given throughout by such a situation. I remember the crowds of soldiers, the gay, young officers, going or coming, the receipt of important news, the many discussions, the returning wounded and so on.

"I remember very well seeing Gen. Taylor with his staff and other officers at the St. Charles Theatre one evening (after talking with them during the day). There was a short play on the stage, but the principal performance was from Dr. Colyer's troupe of 'Model Artists,' then in the full tide of their popularity. They gave many fine groups and solo shows. The house was crowded with uniforms and shoulder straps. Gen. T. himself, if I remember right, was almost the only officer in civilian clothes; he was a jovial, old, rather stout, plain man, with a wrinkled and dark yellow face, and, in ways and manners, the least of conventional ceremony or etiquette I ever saw; he laughed unrestrainedly at everything comical. He had a great personal resemblance to Fenimore Cooper, the novelist, of New York. I remember General

Pillow and quite a cluster of other *militaires* also present.

"One of my choice amusements during my stay in New Orleans, especially of a Sunday morning. The show was a varied and curious one; among the rest the Indian and negro hucksters with their wares. For there were always fine specimens of Indians, both men and women, young and old. I remember I nearly always on these occasions got a large cup of delicious coffee with a biscuit for my breakfast, from the immense shining copper kettle of a great Creole mulatto woman (I believe she weighed 230 pounds). I never have had such coffee since. About nice drinks, anyhow, my recollection of the 'cobblers' (with strawberries and snow on top of the large tumblers), and also the exquisite wines and the perfect and mild French brandy help the regretful reminiscence of my New Orleans experiences of those days. And what splendid and roomy and leisurely barrooms! particularly the grand ones of the St. Charles and St. Louis. Bargains, appointments, business conferences, etc., were generally held in these barrooms.

"I used to wander a midday hour or two now and then for amusement on the crowded and bustling levees on the banks of the river. The diagonally wedged-in boats, the stevedores, the piles of cotton and other merchandise, the carts, mules, negroes, etc., afforded never-ending studies and sights to me. I made acquaintances among the captains, boatmen, or other characters, and often had long talks with them—sometimes finding a real rough diamond among such chance encounters. Sun-

days I sometimes went forenoons to the old Catholic Cathedral in the French quarter. I used to walk a good deal in this arrondissement; but I have deeply regretted since that I did not cultivate, while I had such a good opportunity, the chance of better knowledge of French and Spanish Creole New Orleans people. (I have an idea that there is much and of importance about the Latin race contributions to American nationality in the South and Southwest that I have grown to think highly of and that will never be put on record)."

A week later the first number of the *Crescent* appeared. It was published at No. 95 St. Charles street, at a subscription price of \$8 per annum or 15 cents per week. This was a bid for popularity as the other papers were asking \$12 per annum. But the *Crescent* was neither better nor worse than its contemporaries. It was a large folio four-page paper, very cleanly printed, and managed in the leisurely fashion of the small-town weekly of our own day. The contents were mainly local. Only occasionally did a belated European, Central American, or northern news dispatch find reproduction in its columns. Its policies were democratic, and the editorials filled with a spirit of intense Americanism. The principal event during Whitman's connection with the paper was the trial of some officers for misconduct during the Mexican war; this trial took place in Mexico, and the particulars were very slow in reaching New Orleans, but seem to have been awaited with intense eagerness, nevertheless; so that the *Crescent* was justified in devoting four and five columns at a time to it.

Nowadays, the reader turns over hastily the pages which were then of such palpitating interest.

Whitman's work was of the most general sort. He seems to have reported the Recorders' Court. We have among the paragraphs dedicated to this source of information, one which contains the truly Whitmanesque suggestion that it would be a great saving "to the inhabitants of New Orleans, to send all the lawyers, judges, and recorders to Kam-schatka, Greenland, or Lands' End." Or again, he figured on the editorial page, with a disquisition on "All Fool's Day," "Hero Presidents," "University Studies," or some other subject about which he knew equally little. Slavery seems to have attracted little attention from Whitman, or at any rate, he was able to publish nothing on the subject. The only paragraph which we can attribute to him that touches even remotely on the subject was printed in the *Crescent* in April, and narrates the return of a slave woman, who, after escaping from New Orleans, and residing some time with "a free negro woman," in Ohio, decided to return home, preferring "slavery to such freedom as she enjoyed while absent."

Whitman's lucubrations on the presidency were apparently suggested by the candidacy of General Taylor, who as a hero of the Mexican war was already understood to be virtually certain of the election. "We are not of those men who think that the permanency of our institutions is at all threatened by our position to admire great generals and elevate them to the presidency," he observes. . . . "But, while we have none of these fears. . . . we sincerely deprecate

the efforts to raise any man to that high office merely because he has shown skill and courage in manoeuvring men, horses and cannon. To be sure, it is not despicable talent which enables a man to exercise those faculties—the rather inferior faculties of a general—with tact and success.... We all admit that all the moral and intellectual qualities of a president may be found in a good general.... Still, we cannot arrive at the conclusion that it is always best to make a president out of such a general. For to do so is in some measure to turn from its proper use the high office created by our fathers for certain great purposes. It is to change into an office of reward for military merit that which was meant to be a place of duty and labor."

The editorial on "Universal Studies" is interesting as it is one of the few contributions to the *Crescent* to which the writer affixed his initial, "W," thus identifying its authorship positively. It sets forth a theory of education which coincides with the most advanced thinking on the subject in our own day. It was inspired by a report about the methods pursued by one of the profes-

sors in the then recently established University of Louisiana, afterwards renamed the Tulane University of Louisiana. Whitman felt that studies should have for their object the expansion of the soul. 'If we are right in saying that the object of university education is rather to inspire the student with an ardent desire to search after truth, than to infuse into his mind correct opinions on all subjects within the scope of university instruction—it will be immediately perceived that it is more important for the professors and text-writers to be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of a pure and elevated philosophy—than for them to come up to a certain standard of orthodoxy, erected by a certain sect in politics, religion, or literature.... Let the professor tell the opinions of others and their reasonings, as well as his own, and then say to his hearers, 'I cannot decide for you; you must inquire and decide for yourselves.'"

Whitman closed a column article by recommending that text-books should be written after the same manner as that recommended for the professorial lecture.

Because of Beauty

By MAUD USCHOLD

Labor may groan
 Yet purge his sweat with incense
 And bind his wounds with silk.
 But the dreamer must bleed
 Because of beauty;
 There is no band to staunch
 The pulse of dreams.

Book Reviews

SALUT MANHATTAN

(*Manhattan Transfer*, by John Dos Passos.
Harper and Brothers, \$2.00.)

"I N reviewing," said somebody, "You should always try to sound more intelligent than you are, and never fall back on saying: 'I like this book; it seems to me interesting and the kind of book I like.' In the case of Mr. Dos Passos' novel about New York this fairly obvious warning is doubly wasted on the present reviewer. I do not like *Manhattan Transfer*, and furthermore am hard put to it to say why I do not like it.

There may be several different ways of celebrating a great city, but Mr. Dos Passos' way is of all the most strange. No one would deny that his novel is, in its way, an epic, despite its rather too frequent splatterings of mechanical lyricism, it also reads like an almost unadulterated hymn of hate. There can be no error. The author really hates his deplorable puppets like a moralist, like a Hebrew prophet, for their own good; there is very little of that expansive love of the grotesque and the horrible for their own sake which is called modern in our little poets, and which, as a matter of fact, is as old as the Romanesque sculptor, as old as Petronius. There appear to be several hundred characters in *Manhattan Transfer*, and each new batch is more abhorrent than the last. The book reads like an indictment of the race. Or is it only an indictment of America,

of New York? One believed Mr. Dos Passos to have become the most joyous of American cockneys. Nothing less like a Hebrew prophet can be imagined than this exuberant young man, so zealous a lover of life the mere living. Yet there are moments in his novel when the concentration of hatred lifts away from the puppets and envelops like a steam the overtowering city in whose canyons and crannies the puppets pullulate before being thrown out on what Mr. Dos Passos' master would call the snotgreen sea wherein laps the feet of skyscrapers.

For the method deployed here would seem to owe something to Ulysses and the cinema, though the characters, one hopes, came exclusively out of Mr. Dos Passos' head. Personally, I like the short quasi-symphonic preludes to each chapter better than anything in the chapters themselves, chapters bearing the irresponsible labels of Ferryslip, Skyscraper, Tracks, Dollars, Nickelodeon, the Burthen of Nineveh etc. At their best these captions reveal what Mr. Dos Passos can do to the language when he gets in stride, and at their worst they are still better than subtitles concocted by a writer of picture-sequences who has read Joyce. Curiously uneven, these captions, like the proverbial box of unmixed paints hurled at the head of the reader! But a great deal can be done by mixing up headlines, clichés, advertisements, the names of suburban stations etc., to form an impression of metropolitan evening as good as this:

The sun's moved to Jersey, the sun's behind Hoboken.

Covers are clicking on typewriters, rolltop desks are closing; elevators go up empty, come down jammed. It's ebbside in the downtown district, flood in... Flatbush, Woodlawn, Dyckman street, Sheepshead Bay, New Lots Avenue, Canarsie.

Pink sheets, green sheets, gray sheets, FULL MARKET REPORTS FINALS ON HAVRE DE GRACE. Print squirms among the shopworn, officeworn, sagging faces, sore fingertips, aching insteps, strongarm men crowd into subway expresses. SENATORS 8 GIANTS 2, DIVA RECOVERS PEARLS, \$800,000 ROBBERY.

It's ebbside on Wall Street, floodtide in the Bronx.

The sun's gone down in Jersey.

"Godamighty," shouted Sandbourne, and pounded with his fist on the desk, "I don't think so.... A man's morals aren't anybody's business.... I think Stanford White has done more for the city of New York etc. etc...."

Oh Mr. Dos Passos has his atmosphere pat all right, as he speeds and skids through four hundred and three pages, from the epoch when people had just vaguely heard of Port Arthur and those wonderful little Japs to the relatively recent epoch of the Bobbed-hair Bandit. He just misses the Crossword Puzzle, but only just. In a word, if this sort of thing is painting the body and soul of New York, he has pulled it off. And he has a flair for a certain sort of suffocating squalor second to none. After reading a fragment episode on Page 378, I am happy to enroll myself among the pure and declare for the Clean Books' Bill. I

thought I had experienced every known nastiness in naturalistic literature, ancient and modern; I have assisted with Mr. Bloom in the *petit endroit* and the Turkish bath, and rolled in the seasick cab with the alcoholic heroine of *A Mummer's Wife*, but Mr. Dos Passos gets the prize, so far as I am concerned. And the worst of it is that Page 378 has no function, no faint articulation to the spine of the novel, not the slightest. It is inserted, apparently, so that Mr. Dos Passos, gallantly hurling a *pot de fleurs* at the cohorts of the Nice can add: "See how jolly low I can be when I try!"

If this book has a reason for being, the reason must be sought in the characterization. There are, as I have indicated, scores of characters, but the author has lavished his attentions only on three or four, principally a girl, a boy reporter and a collegiate highflyer, named "Stan." O those afflicting, those veritably nauseating, college boys of his! Oh those all too life-like photographs, signed Dos Passos, and bearing the labels "Stan" and "Phil," of long, cleanlimbed automata with their Brooks Brothers dialogue and their smileless intoxications, their "You bets" and their "Sure things!" Dear man, I entreat you to leave them alone. Don't touch them again, those gilded lads and golden girls, even if, in your heart, you don't hate them quite as much as you seem to hate the others.

But the girl, to whom the author relaxes his austerity as Paphnutius did to Thais, merits a paragraph all to herself. She is called Elaine, and to push herself on to the stage, she early marries a gentleman of her own sex. Next she is caught with the humorous Stan in the

closet of a newspaper boy, after which she has an abortion and goes to tea at the Ritz. Then she marries the boy and they have a child—at least I think it is his—but she soon throws him over, reducing him to dipsomania, neurasthenia and incipient insanity. He does not die of it, however; he goes to Jersey. Finally she falls, always beautiful and dumb, into the arms of a hardboiled lawyer who has ever desired her. This heroine provides an excellent role in a film of the popular school for Miss Barbara la Marr.

Human, all too human, you tell yourself, remembering that Mr. Dos Passos is a good realist, and that therefore his characters are no better than they should be.

Human, but so d--nd dull!

It is worth adding that this lily maid excites an almost aphrodisiac emotion in the breast of a great contemporary Critic. "Like Helen of Troy," Mr. Burton Rascoe repeats, entranced. If Mr. Rascoe does not look out, Dos Passos, always on the watch for a good naturalistic subject, may write a book about him.

The fact that *Manhattan Transfer* is a rank disappointment to this reviewer is, after all, unimportant. The only question is whether it is a success as a novel. Superficially, yes, since the author has reeled off a dazzling and disconcerting picture of New York in two decades, and done it with considerable metallic beauty. Actually, no, because New York reacts on the fifty to a hundred separate souls in the narrative in exactly the same way that it reacts on the sensitized soul of Jimmy Herf. He has treated New York in precisely the same fashion that he

treated the War in Three Soldiers, and the city, at least, is too complex to be miniaturized through the blue glasses of a single neuroticism. In his most successful book, *Streets of Night*, (I say successful in the sense of art, not in the sense of Doran & Company) this was all right because there were only three characters, and all three were typical college-bred neuropaths, obsessed by what they felt was the full unpleasantness of modern American life. Besides the poor young things had to live in Boston, which already explains much of their unhappiness. But *Manhattan Transfer* contains hundreds of characters and every mother's son of them is wrestling like the lost souls in Dante with the full unpleasantness of modern life, without respect of age, sex, education, income or class. They all feel it, that cloud of enveloping unpleasantness, the burden of Nineveh,—bankers, lawyers, bellboys, waitresses, chorus-girls, aesthetes, hustlers and fags. This is not realistic, I maintain, and it does not ring true. Such a vision is worth very little except as an eloquent and rather sickminded piece of impressionism.

I am well aware that this sounds like the mouthings of one of that pussyfoot-school of reviewers who, though all the time tremendously scared that they will miss out on something truly vital, really modern, are far more scared by a book like *Manhattan Transfer*, angry with its experimental character, put out by its unpleasantness. I am sorry but that is the way I feel about it. There is such a thing as cultivating modernity in writing, while all the time detesting it in fact as fiercely as Tolstoy. Mr. Dos Passos seems to me like a man with

a great talent for writing and a real zest for things who, for reasons best known to himself, is playing for the nonce St. Simon on his Pillar. The gesture is profitable, but the vision, from that elevation, is not realistic, and the result is not art.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

THE WEARY BLUES

(*The Weary Blues*, by Langston Hughes.
Alfred A. Knopf, New York).

MUCH of the stream of poetry that flows endlessly from the publishing fount these days possesses the originality and refreshing qualities of flat dish-water. The parturition of the older poets is somewhat forced, while the younger ones are apparently slightly crippled by adolescent debauches.

It was not so many years ago that poetry became a wonderful and a fearsome thing to behold. At any rate, it was interesting. Fifty-seven varieties of schools were formed, including Futurists, Impressionists, Neo-Impressionists, Dadaists, Vorticists, Expressionists, and God Knows what not! The sweet untempted virgins of Back Bay suffered tobacco heart and parental displeasure by smoking cigars—and incidentally writing verse—in a feeble imitation of Amy Lowell; callow collegiates caught head colds and got blisters on their feet from going hatless and tramping delicately on life in the manner of Harry Kemp. Some followed Ezra Pound to Europe, a chosen few published their brain children in the *Dial*, a great many were lost in the

shuffle. Occasional critics asked plaintively where the younger poets were headed. The answer, in the light of the verse now published, is obvious. They weren't headed anywhere.

There are few exceptions, including *The Weary Blues*. The poetry in this volume is far better than the introductory encomium by Carl Van Vechten, which tends to befog the product with the personality of the author, would lead one to expect. George Moore might object to Hughes' work on the ground that it is too subjective, too personal. True, there is an undertone of sentimentality throughout that does not, however, detract from such passages as:

'To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! whirl! whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening....
A tall, slim tree....
Night comes tenderly,
Black like me.'

It is in his jazz variations that Hughes is undeniably at his best. The title poem together with "To Midnight Nan at Leroy's" possess a fluidly sensuous rhythm...rich and colorful. There is, in contrast, a lyric simplicity in some of his other moods—as in "Suicide's Note:"

"The calm,
Cool face of the river
Asked me for a kiss."

With this volume Langston Hughes takes his place with other poets of his race; Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Dunbar and Claude McKay.

JOSEPH HILTON SMYTH.

THE SONG OF THE INDIAN WARS

("The Song of the Indian Wars," by John G. Niehardt, Illustrated by Allen T. True, New York. Mac-Millan, 1925).

MR. NEIHARDT'S epic cycle of the west is probably the closest approach to epic in American literature. It is to be classified, properly, as stirring narrative verse. As such, "The Song of the Indian Wars" is surprisingly good, more palatable to a modern American reader than Walter Scott. The first two volumes in the cycle, "The Song of Three Friends" and "The Song of Hugh Glass" also contained some excellent work. Mr. Niehardt has yet to deal with the periods of migration and exploration.

"The Song of the Indian Wars" reads like a novel. It is much easier to read than some fiction—than Mr. Sinclair Lewis's, say. The verse moves with great fluency and the narrative and descriptive style is vivid. The poem is a credit to its author and to American verse. Mr. Niehardt's very facility, which is his deadly enemy in lyrical poetry, is his best friend in narrative. It enables him to write with ease, and a long story in verse, if it is not easy, is nothing. His lines are not merely facile: many have fine resonance and strength, and very few are bad. Mr. Niehardt's verse is good, and often distinguished in imagery.

The following passages are chosen at random:

....The vision broke
Of distant, princely acres unpossessed.

Again the bugles of the Race blew west
That once the Tigris and Euphrates heard...
All summer now the Mississippi saw
What long ago the Hellespont beheld...

What devastating need
Had set so many faces pale with greed
Against the sunset?

Remembering the story of his years,
His Brulé warriors loved him standing so.
And some recalled that battle long ago
Far off beside the upper Arkansas,
When, like the freshet of a sudden thaw,
The Utes came down; and how the Brulés,
caught
In ambush, sang the death-song as they fought.

Cries arose
From where his band of Brule warriors sat—
The cries that once sent Panic up the Platte,
An eyeless running panting through the gloom.

Serenely now the ghost of summer dreamed
On Powder River.

The councillors were heard no more that day;
And from the moony hill tops all night long
The wolves gave answer to the battle-song,
And saw their valley hunting-grounds aflame
With roaring fires, and frenzied shadows there
That leaped and sang as wolves do, yet were
men.

And faces brave with paint to outstare Death
In some swift hush of battle.

The little band of troopers held the height—
Green manhood withering in a locust flight
Of arrows! Aye, a gloaming of despair
The shuttling arrows wove above them there,
So many were the bows....
Then presently, men say, a white chief reeled;
Rolled from his saddle; like a man gone daft
Got up and doddered, tugging at a shaft
That sprouted from his belly. Then a yell
Of many bowmen mocked him as he fell,
His writhing body feathered like a goose.

The blizzard broke at dusk. All night it roared
Round Fort Phil Kearney mourning for the
slain.

Meanwhile Omniscience in a swivel chair,
Unmenaced half a continent away,
Amid more pressing matters of the day
Had edited the saga of the dead.

The meadows of Absoraka grew sweet
With nursing June. War-ponies, winter-thin,
Nuzzled the dugs of ancient might therein
Against the day of victory.

These, the last lines in the book, are
from "The Death of Crazy Horse:"

All night long
There was a sound of mourning in the dark.
And when the morning heard the meadowlark,
The last great Sioux rode silently away.
Before the pony-drag on which he lay
An old man tottered. Bowed above the bier,

A little wrinkled woman kept the rear
With not a sound and nothing in her eyes.

Who knows the crumbling summit where he
lies

Alone among the badlands? Kyotes prowl
About it, and the voices of the owl
Assume the day-long sorrow of the crows,
These many grasses and these many snows.

"The Song of the Indian Wars" contains many lines that are traditionally derivative. Mr. Neihardt, however, uses the old stuff well. He has written a good poem. It is his own, and an honor to him.

JOHN MCCLURE.

CHARLES COTTON

*(Poems from the Works of Charles Cotton,
newly decorated by Claud Lovat Fraser.
Henry Holt and Co.,
New York, 1925).*

SO long has it been since Charles Cotton was a wit and a wordster that a short biographical notice well may precede any remarks about this book. He was born in Staffordshire, England, in 1630. A country gentleman, with an estate much encumbered through a father's extravagance, he was a friend of Izaak Walton's with whom he fished and rhymed. In the academic annals he is dismissed with this summary

"... author of much verse, quaint, and gay, frigid, and spirited; love songs; and bacchic poems."

Cotton's poems have proved an excellent medium for presenting the Fraser drawings. Claud Lovat Fraser was always an admirer of the restoration poet, and the poems selected by the artist, six sonnets, four quatrains and some odds and ends, are happy examples of the poetry he delighted in. Unfortunately, none of the seventy-five drawings, (and each of these is a treat in itself) can here be reproduced, but one at least one of the sonnets clamors to be heard. It is the first of the "Resolution in Four Sonnets of a Poetical Question put to me by a Friend, concerning Four Rural Sisters:

Alice is tall and upright as a Pine,
White as blanched Almonds, or the falling
snow,

Sweet as are Damask Roses when they blow,
And doubtless fruitful as the swelling Vine.

Full fain she would be husbanded and yet
Alas! she cannot a fit Lab'rer get
To cultivate her to her own content!

Fain would she be (God wot) about her task,
And yet (forsooth) she is too proud to ask,
And (which is worse) too modest to consent.

ADALINE KATZ.

Another Demosthenes

By RICHARD KIRK

When anguish enters blood and bones,
And I of life and death repent,
I take into my mouth these stones
To make me eloquent.